

**OPINION 2256 (Case 3446)*****Anolis chrysolepis* Duméril & Bibron, 1837 (Reptilia, Squamata): precedence given over *Draconura nitens* Wagler, 1830**

**Abstract.** The specific name *Anolis chrysolepis* Duméril & Bibron, 1837 is conserved for a polytypic species of lizard that is geographically widespread in northern South America. The name was threatened by the name *Draconura nitens* Wagler, 1830 currently used as a senior synonym of *Anolis chrysolepis* Duméril & Bibron, 1837. The Commission has given precedence to the name *Anolis chrysolepis* Duméril & Bibron, 1837, over the name *Draconura nitens* Wagler, 1830, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; Reptilia; Squamata; POLYCHROTIDAE; *Anolis*; *Draconura*; *Anolis chrysolepis*; *Draconura nitens*; lizards; South America.

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**Ruling**

- (1) Under the plenary power it is hereby ruled that the name *chrysolepis* Duméril & Bibron, 1837, as published in the binomen *Anolis chrysolepis*, is given precedence over the name *nitens* Wagler, 1830, as published in the binomen *Draconura nitens*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.
- (2) The following names are hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:
  - (a) *chrysolepis* Duméril & Bibron, 1837, as published in the binomen *Anolis chrysolepis* and as defined by the lectotype (MHNP 2436, Mana, French Guiana) designated by Vanzolini & Williams (1970), with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over the name *nitens* Wagler, 1830, as published in the binomen *Draconura nitens*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
  - (b) *nitens* Wagler, 1830, as published in the binomen *Draconura nitens*, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over the name *chrysolepis* Duméril & Bibron, 1837, as published in the binomen *Anolis chrysolepis*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.

**History of Case 3446**

An application to give the name *Anolis chrysolepis* Duméril & Bibron, 1837 precedence over the name *Draconura nitens* Wagler, 1830, for a polytypic species of South American anoles of biogeographic importance, was received from Charles W. Myers (*American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY, U.S.A.*) on 28 December 2007. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 65: 205–213 (September 2008). The title, abstract and keywords of the case were published on the Commission's website. One supporting comment was published in BZN 66: 78.

## Decision of the Commission

On 1 December 2009 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 65: 211. At the close of the voting period on 1 March 2010 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes – 22: Alonso-Zarazaga, Ballerio, Brothers, Fautin, Grygier, Halliday, Harvey, Kojima, Krell, Lamas, Lim, Minelli, Patterson, Pape, Papp, Rosenberg, Štys, van Tol, Winston, Yanega, Zhang and Zhou.

Negative votes – 4: Bogutskaya, Kottelat, Kullander and Ng.

Bouchet ABSTAINED. Pyle was on leave of absence.

Voting FOR, Grygier noted a formal point, that the Case stated that it was submitted in part under Article 23.6. While this Article is crucial to the arguments of the Case, it itself does not call for any matter to be referred to the Commission, so its citation at the head of the abstract was not necessary. Winston voted FOR and commented that although the nomen dubium may be little used, was used enough to be a cause of instability.

Voting AGAINST, Bogutskaya observed that the case as it was presented did not need any special ruling by the Commission, but could be solved by taxonomic means. She noted that the author clearly showed that the original description of the species *Draconura nitens* Wagler, 1830 ‘might prove diagnostic’ (which is repeated throughout the text), but no species that matched the diagnosis had been found to date. Furthermore, the author provided irrefutable reasoning that *Anolis chrysolepis* was a different species and that the synonymy was erroneous. Thus, if the two names were not considered to be synonyms by an expert (who presumably will publish his opinion in a taxonomic paper), no Commission intervention is required. Kottelat, voting AGAINST, explained that he felt: (1) *nitens* is poorly described, has a very vague type locality and apparently no type (the application does not explain what happened to it). The problem had been known since 1970. If a neotype had been designated at that time, the ‘instability’ would now be history. It should be done now and today’s instability would be history in ten years; (2) *Anolis chrysolepis* is said to be a polytypic species. This means that under many species concepts *A. chrysolepis* and *A. nitens* (by appropriate selection of a neotype) could be distinct species and the problem would no longer exist (except for authors using a concept needing the subspecies rank); (3) The proposed conditional suppression bears intrinsic instability, especially in the case of ‘polytypic’ species with a name valid or invalid depending on the species concept used. Even with conditional suppression, the problem remains as long as there is no neotype designation. Kullander, also voting AGAINST, said that the taxonomy of this group seemed so confused anyway, with a myriad of subspecies to be used for supporting the refugium hypothesis (as explained in paragraph 26). Without a neotype (or other name-bearing type) for *Anolis nitens* there was no case to answer, and he felt it was possible for a vote to be positive. Ng, voting AGAINST, said that although the case was well explained he saw a simpler solution to the *Anolis* mess by simply selecting an appropriate neotype specimen for *Draconura nitens* Wagler, 1830. That would ensure it did not become synonymous with *Anolis chrysolepis* Duméril & Bibron, 1837. Because the name *nitens* is not completely forgotten and is a well-known nomen dubium, prudent neotype selection would sort this out. Ng suggested that perhaps the type of *Anolis refulgens* Duméril & Bibron,

1837 could be made the neotype of *Draconura nitens* Wagler, 1830, making the latter the senior synonym. This action would automatically conserve the use of *Anolis chrysolepis* Duméril & Bibron, 1837, as it is generally used at present. Bouchet ABSTAINED, with the comment that he regretted that the proposals submitted for Commission vote were incomplete. He said that the name *Anolis chrysolepis* should clearly be conserved in view of its extensive usage, and this usage should come out fully Code-compliant as a result of the proposals. However, as a result of the proposal, the name *Draconura nitens* remained an available and potentially valid name, yet it was in taxonomic limbo. Without a name-bearing type it remained a nomenclatural hazard to other nominal species of *Anolis* from South America. He believed the name *Draconura nitens* should have been either (a) suppressed, or (b) stabilised by the designation of a neotype. Thus he did not approve the nomenclatural instability created by the proposals with regard to the name *nitens*, although he understood the intention to stabilise the name *chrysolepis*. As such he felt he could not vote for or against the proposals.

### Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on the Official Lists by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

*chrysolepis*, *Anolis*, Duméril & Bibron, 1837, *Erpétologie général ou histoire naturelle complète des reptiles*, vol. 4, Librairie Encyclopédique de Roret, Paris, p. 94.

*nitens*, *Draconura*, Wagler, 1830, *Natürliches System der Amphibien, mit vorangehender Classification der Säugthiere und Vögel*, vi, 9 folio pls. J.G. Cotta, Munich, p. 149.